

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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EO. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ELTN, CH

SUBJ: FLOODING IN HOPEI AND SHANSI PROVINCES

1. SUMMARY. IN THE LAST WEEK OF JULY AND THE FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST HEAVY RAINS IN SEVERAL LOCALITIES FROM EASTERN MOST HOPEI TO CENTRAL SHANSI AND AS FAR SOUTH AS NORTHERN HONAN EXPERIENCED HEAVY RAINS AND SOME FLOODING AND DAMAGE TO ROADS AND RAILROADS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING TRAVEL BY RAIL FROM PEKING TO CHENGCHOU ON JULY 31, USLO OFFICER NOTED THAT HEAVY RAINS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN SOUTHERN HOPEI AND NORTHERN HONAN PROVINCES IN PREVIOUS DAYS. LOW-LYING FIELDS BETWEEN PAOTING AND SHIHCHIACHUANG WERE FLOODED WITH WATER LEVELS RANGING FROM SEVERAL INCHES TO OVER TWO FEET. CONSIDERABLE CROP DAMAGE TO CORN AND KAOLIANG WAS APPARENT, ALTHOUGH FIELDS ON HIGHER GROUND SEEMED TO BE DOING WELL. SIMILAR CONDITIONS WERE NOTED AROUND ANYANG AND HSINHSIANG IN NORTHERN HONAN. ALTHOUGH RIVER LEVELS WERE HIGH, FLOW SEEMED TO BE CONTAINED WITHIN BANKS AND DIKES, LEADING ONE

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TO BELIEVE THAT LOW-LEVEL FLOODING WAS DUE LARGELY TO HIGH WATER TABLE AND WATERLOGGED SOIL. ON RETURN TRIP ALONG SAME ROUTE ON AUGUST 4TH, SITUATION APPEARED TO HAVE WORSENERD SLIGHTLY DUE TO RAINS OCCURRING IN EARLY AUGUST.

3. A CANADIAN EMBASSY OFFICER FLYING FROM LANCHOW TO PEKING AUGUST 7 SAID THAT FLOODED AREA IN CENTRAL HOPEI JUST NORTH OF SHIHCHIACHUANG WAS EXTENSIVE AND IN SOME AREAS SHEETS OF WATER INCLUDED TWO OR THREE VILLAGES. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE TORRENTIAL RAINS NEAR LANCHOW HE SAW NO FLOODING IN KANSU.

4. ACCORDING TO TRAVELERS WHO HAD VISITED TACHAI AT THE END OF JULY, THE RAIL LINE BETWEEN SHIHCHIACHUANG AND TAIYUAN HAD BEEN DISRUPTED BY WASHOUTS IN LATE JULY, AND THERE WAS APPARENTLY ANOTHER BREAK BETWEEN TAIYUAN AND SIAN. RAIL TRAFFIC TO SIAN VIA THIS ROUTE WAS BEING REROUTED THROUGH CHENGCHOU. A CHINESE OFFICIAL IN SIAN CONFIRMED TO USLO OFFICER THAT UNUSUALLY HEAVY RAINS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN WESTERN HOPEI IN LATE JULY AND THAT THE TRACK FROM TAIYUAN TO SHIHCHIACHUANG HAD BEEN WASHED OUT. RAIL SERVICE HAD NOT BEEN RESTORED BY AUGUST 4.

5. USLO OFFICERS VISITING PEITAIHO AND EASTERN MOST HOPEI THE FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST NOTED FLOODING BETWEEN PEITAIHO AND TANGKU. ALTHOUGH THE RAIL LINE WAS OUT OF THE WATER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOME ROADS WERE SUBMERGED. A CANADIAN RETURNING FROM HARBIN IN EARLY AUGUST SAID HE SAW NO FLOODING IN LIAONING, AND A JAPANESE EMBASSY OFFICER ARRIVING BY TRAIN FROM SHANTUNG AUGUST 8 SAID HE SAW NONE BETWEEN TSINGTAO AND PEKING.

6. THERE WAS SOME WATER IN FIELDS IN THE PEKING AREA BUT EXCEPT FOR SOME LODGING, DAMAGE WAS NOT SEVERE. WATER IN INTERMITTENTLY DRY RIVERS IN THE PEKING AREA IS HIGH AND THE PRC IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS TO REFILL RESERVOIRS WHICH WERE KEPT LOW IN 1976 FOR FEAR OF EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE. WATER IN THE MING TOMBS RESERVOIR, FOR EXAMPLE, IS AT ITS HIGHEST LEVEL IN OVER TWO YEARS.

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